



**Virginia Indian Advisory Board
Recognition Workgroup
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Monday, April 18, 2022

Time: 6:00pm-8:00pm

Location: Virtual – Google Meets

Committee Members Present:

Buck Woodard
Pamela Ross
Gregory D Smithers
Brad Hatch

Committee Members Absent:

David Cornsilk (excused)

Non-Members in Attendance: (not members of the public)

Suzanne Holland, Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
Brandon Custalow, Virginia Indian Advisory Board Chair

Attorney Bill Hurd provided public comment as did community member, Annette Price.
Gary Price and Chief Price (Wolf Creek Tribe) were also in attendance as members of the public.

Discussion of Workgroup protocol; responsibility of Meeting Minutes;

Motion to approve February minutes - Buck Woodard

Brad Hatch second

Minutes from 2/16 approved

Minutes from 3/9 not provided

Holland advised Secretary of the Commonwealth does not have a designated resource to take minutes. Workgroup advised this was provided by the previous administration. Holland will determine if this request can be supported.

Meeting minutes – can the secretary's office provide someone for facilitation?

Letterhead – can this be created so that formal communication can be provided?

VA Indian Advisory Board Meeting March 10th - Workgroup members were not able to participate; Buck Woodard communicated with the Chair, Brandon Custalow - Buck provided a summary of that meeting from the minutes; VIAB recommendations to the Workgroup/decision was to be mindful of the overall timeline of the petition; Buck - posed question to Workgroup



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about whether they should create a document addressing all criteria at once; not requesting additional information from petitioner. The goal is to submit a report to VIAB with recommendation by early Summer. Workgroup agreed to meet more frequently between then to discuss the remaining criteria.

Bill Hurd (public) related that the petitioner would like to have opportunity to respond to Workgroup concerns about each criteria and allow them to provide additional documentation for each rather than waiting until a culminating report/recommendation to VIAB. Bill indicated that the petitioner would like feedback in writing from the Workgroup on each criteria.

Two paths to address expeditious decision:

1. Workgroup could either continue addressing each criteria and providing written feedback to petitioner OR
2. Workgroup could address each criteria and provide recommendation to Board in culminating presentation and report.

Workgroup addressed preference to have a more aggressive schedule to complete the 3 remaining criterion and provide a summary to the board and Wolf Creek. Workgroup agreed they would like to meet more regularly in order to address each criteria.

Discussion of Criterion 3

- Trace group's existence within Virginia from first contact to the present.
- Greg Smithers provided input about the various records prevented. Colonial Census record keeping was inherently problematic in the early 20th century; recommended to petitioner.
- Smithers related discrepancies in Census records about the tribes and residents in different VA regions.
- 1835 Census occurred during "removal" era when they were forcibly moving people West. Smithers described different Census records referencing Cherokee lands and recommended to petitioner they find family members who are recorded in some of those reports from the Bureau.
- 1960 was the first time people could choose race on the Census and not until much later they could select multiple race/ethnicity.

Further Workgroup Discussion on Criterion #3:

- Patrilineal line explored but noted that census records are slim
- Identify family members on earlier rolls (federal census data)
- No narrative in the petition – references point to other criteria
- Discussion of how the family came to reside in that space – what were the historical factors that brought them into that space and separated them from others?



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- Is there a community enclave?
- References in county records?
- Major point is narrative that shows connection to familial location and return despite migrations – an origin story

Workgroup concluded that there was not an established Cherokee lineage established in the family records from the petitioner.

Buck Woodard referenced issue with the criteria that it refers to the “group” which would be difficult for any tribe to demonstrate. It would be difficult to satisfy this criterion given the vagueness of the criterion description.

Workgroup Recommendation: create a narrative/have a discussion about how the Cherokee people came to be located in that region (what historical events led them to establish there) and if there are family records that also support that; showing community through time; multiple families living/existing near each other and creating familial ties that also reference themselves as Cherokee (marriage records/etc)

Workgroup concurred that no evidence was provided for that criterion - no historical narrative demonstrated through records/evidence; showing multiple families histories all identifying as Cherokee rather than lineage of a single family. Workgroup would like to see some of the Cherokee archeology cross-referenced under this criteria (artifacts that overlap with the time period they claim residency/how that is consistent with family records of the tribe)

Greg Smithers related that having substantive evidence of a community referring to themselves as Cherokee may be difficult - but having records of them identifying as a distinct group from a distinct region/location is necessary

Brad Hatch concurred that there was a dearth of records establishing distinct location/movement in a region

Buck Woodard: “need to be able to establish an origin story for this group” - how the group came to be established in the Wolf Creek River area

Pam Ross referenced some of the petitioner records that demonstrate residency in other states, but not Virginia. Would like to see how the Wolf Creek people came to be established in their area.

Smithers: most tribes moved around but also have stories and records of how and why they came back to a certain central homeland/specific place that is central to their group identity.



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Woodard: each Workgroup member will craft a paragraph that can be shared on the record with the petitioners so they may respond accordingly.

Workgroup decision whether to request information from petitioner in writing as they discuss each criteria OR present Workgroup recommendations addressing all the criteria at once.

Pam Ross suggested doing an interim letter requesting additional documentation about the first 3 criteria.

Workgroup concluded they would use letterhead they created to communicate with the petitioner. Brandon Custalow provided input about the Board's recommendation not to send letters to petitioner; concern about timeline of responding to the petitioner.

Workgroup requested simplified letterhead on which to send a request for information from petitioner. Agreement reached on decision noted below:

Decision - workgroup will provide communication to Wolf Creek on criteria 1-3 and then continue working on 4-6 and provide communication upon completion.

Bill Hurd provided public comment as did Annette Price
Gary Price and Chief Price were also in attendance as members of the public.

Event announcement: April 30th Wolf Creek tribe will be at Iron Works in Chesterfield County; drum ceremony and blessing.

Poll to determine next meeting date: set for 4/27
Meeting concluded at approximately 7:40pm.